



## Ramblers Association Cambridge Group

Email: [info@cambridgeramblers.org.uk](mailto:info@cambridgeramblers.org.uk)

Hello Ramblers

### Newsletter No 2, January 2025

Welcome to this second newsletter of the Cambridge Ramblers Group. Our membership is currently around 480 people, numbers are always fluctuating. We held our Annual General Meeting in November 2024. Sadly, this was poorly attended despite having an excellent presentation from Jill Tuffnell on 'The Law regarding the conditions of Public Rights of Way and the responsibilities of landowners, the Highway Authority and users'.

The following Members have been elected or re-elected to be on the committee:

Role	Member
Chair, Walks Co-ordinator (Saturdays)	Jane Crawford-White
Treasurer	Joanna Womack
Secretary, Local Access Forum rep, Footpath Officer (East Cambs)	Jill Tuffnell
Don't Lose Your Way Co-ordinator, website	Paul Cutmore
Minutes Secretary	Harriet Snape
Footpath Officer (South Cambs)	Jean Murray & Tim McCormack
Walk Co-ordinator (Mondays)	Jean Murray
Membership Secretary	James Berry
Walks Co-ordinator	Sushma Paleschi

### Janet Moreton tribute

The saddest item to report this year is the death of Janet Moreton in January. Janet and Roger were responsible for transforming the public rights of way network in the entire County of Cambridgeshire during their 40+ years of service. Their contribution was substantial and wide-ranging. They organized full surveys of every PRow in South Cambs and Cambridge City. They were assiduous in reporting issues concerning rights of way and, when the County Council failed to carry out its legal duty in the 1980s, researched how to get recompense. They involved the Local Government Ombudsman, citing maladministration; he agreed and instructed the County Council to change the way it operated. The Council subsequently totally reorganized how it dealt with rights of way. A new Countryside Group was established, with vastly increased resources. This was the golden age! From being unresponsive the Council became pro-active; new promoted and waymarked routes such as the Wimpole Way, Clopton Way and Fen Rivers Way were either initiated or supported. Walks leaflets were published and issues with rights of way were dealt with.

Janet, with Roger, arranged waymarking of paths by liaising with Parish Councils. They were closely involved in developing the Fen Rivers Way and West Anglia Way. They contributed walks to the Group's publications: Walks in South Cambridgeshire; Walks in East Cambridgeshire and Walks on the South Cambridgeshire Borders. They supported the Icknield Way Association.

And they worked hard safeguarding our rights of way, stopping unnecessary diversions and ensuring historic rights of way were recognized and added to the County's Definitive Map.

Of particular note was the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the A11 on the line of the Fleam Dyke; also the recognition of a long-lost footpath in Bartlow. They investigated and responded to many proposals for path diversions. And they walked – inspecting thousands of miles of paths on a regular basis, reporting any issues and following up any problems.

Janet was the author of ‘Cantab Rambler’, an occasional periodical covering the history of many South Cambs parishes. Janet and Roger held meticulous records throughout their involvement with the Ramblers and the Committee is keen to see that, where appropriate, these are held for posterity in either the Cambridgeshire Collection or the County Archives.

In recognition of the work of both Roger and Janet a plaque has been installed at Wandlebury on the inner ring next to a Hawthorn tree, and a donation to plant some new trees at Waterbeach.

## Main Planning Issues

### Cambridge South Station:

This construction is proceeding apace. Thankfully they have kept open the access to Hobson's Park from Addenbrookes Road, as promised.

### Consultations:

The Cambridge Ramblers Committee have responded to a number of recent consultations on:

- Active Travel Maintenance Hierarchy
- East Cambs Sustrans Report on proposals for cycleways.
- Kingsway Solar Farms developments around Balsham, West Wrating, Weston Green, Weston Colville, and Willingham Green that have started a phase one consultation.
- Guided Busway between Addenbrookes and Babraham
- East West Rail
- Ely - The track between Kings Avenue and the water tower has been of questionable status for a while. Now Cambridgeshire Highways say that it is a ‘public soft road’ and will update their records accordingly.



## **East Cambridgeshire report:**

It is sad to report that the Ramblers (and Lode PC) failed to convince a Planning Inspector that 2 footpaths should not be diverted out of a copse in Lode. We believed we had a good case – but our arguments failed to convince. Now access to a very pleasant wooded area is denied.

There have been no major planning issues in the district; however, it is important to note that Sunnica has been granted planning permission by the Planning Inspectorate to build a huge solar farm in adjacent Suffolk, close to Newmarket. A footpath diversion order in Ely, relating to the King's School's sports pitches, has still not been approved due to concerns relating to flooding risks associated with water run-off.

The planned Wicken to Soham cycle path, which is being funded through a government grant to Soham Town Council, requires the construction of a hard surface path on what is now a grass bridleway. The change of surface must be approved by Cambs County Council. This appears to have been approved by a Council officer and objections by the Ramblers and the British Horse Society have been ignored.

### **Cambs Local Access Forum**

The overriding issue this year has been the impact of the County Council's 'Greenways' programme, aimed at increasing safe cycling opportunities within and between Cambridge's necklace villages and the city. The major issue is the impact on bridleways and their transformation from grassy paths to hard-surfaced, often tarmacked, cycleways. The equestrian lobby repeatedly points to the exclusion of horses and their riders from the safe use of bridleways; cantering is not possible on a hard surface. As a representative of walkers, we also object to the imposition of urban surfaces in the countryside. We walk to escape tarmac.

An application to install a hard surface on a section of the Roman Road at Streetly End near Horseheath has been approved, despite opposition from the British Horse Society (BHS).

## **Walks in 2024**

There has been a regular programme of walks on Saturdays and two Mondays in the month throughout the year. Thanks to Jane Crawford-White and Sushma Paleshi who co-ordinate Saturday walks and Jean Murray who co-ordinates Monday walks. They have been ably supported by a small cohort of regular walk leaders including Hilary Roadley, Cherry Bosworth, James Berry, Marilyn Ehern, Roger Lemming and Joye Rosenstiel when she is in Cambridge. We have welcomed Tim and Sam McCormack as new walk leaders this year. However, we are always looking for new walk leaders.

The programme of walks has been quite varied and has included two London walks along Regents Canal and the Olympic Park & Greenway as well as some in adjacent counties such as Rutland Water, River Stour in Suffolk and in Essex and Bedfordshire. There has been a greater ability to co-ordinate lift sharing thanks to our WhatsApp Group that now has 46 members and is also used for sharing photographs of the walks.

### **Emergency Procedures for Ramblers**

We are planning to hold a training session on emergency procedures for Ramblers. This is following a couple of incidents on walks where a fall resulted in a fracture. This will not be a certificated first aid course as this is not needed for our walks classed as 'leisurely'. It is intended to increase the confidence of regular walkers responding appropriately. Dates still to be arranged but likely to be in March on a weekday. If you would be interested in attending this one-day session please contact us via [info@cambridgeramblers.org.uk](mailto:info@cambridgeramblers.org.uk)

Some other key points are how useful it is for all members to carry 'In case of Emergency' cards – commonly called ICE cards; if you don't have one please get in touch. Also, the 'what3words' smartphone app (which is free) is invaluable for helping emergency services pinpoint a location.



## Reporting Issues on Footpaths

There is a team of Footpath Officers employed through the County Council who address any issues that you report on the condition of footpaths:

- Oliver Ayto – South Cambs
- Mark Peck - East Cambs & Fenland
- Dan Wiggs – Hunts

Do report broken bridges, missing waymarks, overgrown or ploughed up paths.

[Rights of way | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) This page has an interactive map to identify the name of the footpath and then scroll down to the place to report. Select 'Public Right of Way' in the first option box; these jobs go to the colleagues listed above. If you don't report it, it will not get sorted.

If anyone is willing to join a working group to cut back vegetation, add waymarkers, clean signs or information boards, please contact us on [info@cambridgeramblers.com](mailto:info@cambridgeramblers.com)

## Walking Partnership Funds

Anyone going on a Ramble Worldwide holiday can nominate a local walking/rambling group to receive a small payment which must be used to improve access. The Cambridge Ramblers Group has agreed to amalgamate our funds with those of the Cambridge Rambling Club, which administers the combined budget. It is great to report that a new wooden hand gate has recently been installed in Boxworth, replacing a very difficult stile.

## Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW)

Paul Cutmore is the Cambridgeshire Coordinator for this Ramblers project.

a. **Wimpole** DMMOs. In April there was a flurry of activity in villages close to the Wimpole Estate as the National Trust created "Landowner Deposit" notices declaring that there were no public rights of way other than what are already on the Definitive Map. Orwell residents were particularly worried that they might therefore lose access to Victoria Drive and many submitted their Witness Evidence to Paul. He finished the preparation of the two DMMO applications for Victoria Carriage Drive and Home Farm and submitted them to Cambs County Council.

Because of their backlog, the Council estimates that it will be at least 3 years before they start investigating them.

b. **Waterbeach**. Paul has been supporting Richard Stobart's research into an old (pre-WW2) footpath linking Waterbeach and Chittering. Paul is currently drafting the DMMO application.

c. **The national Ramblers DLYW project** has now lost both administrators - it remains to be seen what the impact will be. Before the second one left, Paul asked her for advice on lobbying Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner who is Minister of State in DEFRA. She replied as follows: 'I have asked our Policy and Advocacy team and they have said that some communications will be coming out shortly regarding this type of lobbying and offering walks/meetings with MPs. These will build on the FP Forum and are centred on our Access to Nature Bill proposals, which includes the repeal of 2031, so hopefully you should receive something soon.' See more detail on Access to Nature at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-care-about/outdoors-unlocked>

## Photos and Timeline

Paul is setting up an online Google Photos Album for storing and viewing photos (and video) made by members, and other images of interest including relevant newspaper articles. When ready, Paul can share access with members on request - it will not be published on the website. Members are encouraged to submit their **original** photos of group walks, current and old to [ptcutmore@cix.co.uk](mailto:ptcutmore@cix.co.uk). (Please specify date and location of photos).

